

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

04-428

Orleans

EAS.1284

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): North Eastham

Address: 310 Higgins Road

Historic Name: Catherine Hill House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: [1958-1970]

Source: Deed research, 1970 Plan of Land 34480-B

Style/Form: No Style

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Unknown

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:

Two-unit building with garage (Photo 2, 2007)
Hip-roofed enclosure next to in-ground pool (dates unknown)

Major Alterations (*with dates*):

Existing dwelling demolished to build new one in new location (see above)

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

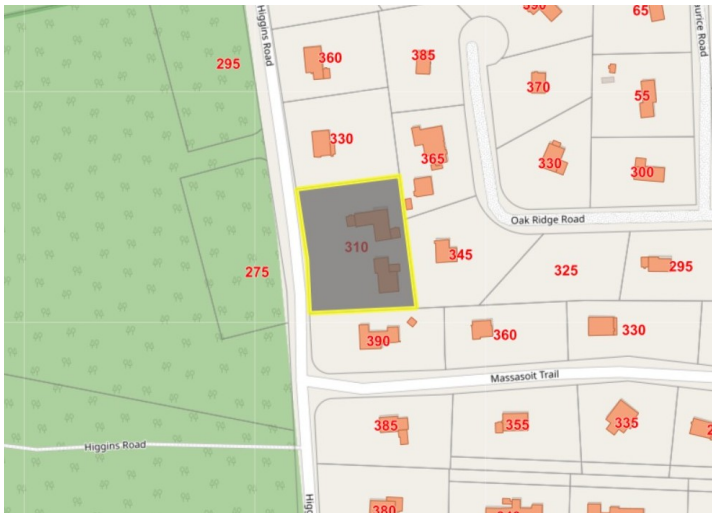
Acreage: 0.72 acres

Setting: This parcel is located on the east side of Higgins Road. The surrounding area is largely developed with mid-20th century subdivisions with small lots, except across the street which remains undeveloped. This multi-building parcel is landscaped with expanses of lawn, mature trees, and large evergreen shrubbery and trees in front of the primary house. Sections of board fence run along the street.

Photograph



Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

The oldest building on this parcel is located in the southeast corner. It has an Assessor date of 1936 but may only date to ca. 1952-1971. It is a modest one-story (possibly 1 ½-story), gable-roofed rectangular block. An open porch with a low-pitched shed roof spans the west elevation. The elevations are clad in wood shingles with plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles. An indication that this cottage does not date back to ca. 1936 may be the roof cornice. In this case, the roof is simply trimmed with narrow fascia boards. With older summer cottage architecture in Eastham, the roofs often had projecting, open eaves. Windows all appear to be modern replacements.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

The original cottage on this property has an Assessor date of 1936, but that is not accurate. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) began conducting periodic aerial photographic surveys of Cape Cod in 1938. There is nothing in this location on the 1938 survey photo or the 1952 survey photo (Photo 3). As can be seen, the entire area remained largely undeveloped. The original cottage first appears on the 1971 USGS survey photo (Photo 4).¹ If that the small cottage does date to the 1930s, then it would have been moved here sometime after the 1958 USGS survey and before the 1971 USGS survey, but to date there is no evidence of that happening.

Title research tracks back to 1958, when Gladys G. Knowles, unmarried, of Clearwater, FL, sold land that included this property to Catherine Hill of West Roxbury.² The deed refers to Higgins Road as having formerly been an old County Road. As noted above, the cottage is first shown on the 1971 USGS aerial survey. Catherine Hill registered the land in Land Court in 1968,³ and in 1970, recorded a subdivision of some of the land along Higgins Road, creating this parcel as Lot 5. As can be seen on that plan, the small cottage in the southeast corner of the parcel was in place by that time, as well as a larger house that was demolished in ca. 2007. This would mean the smaller cottage was built sometime between 1958 and 1970 by Catherine Hill.

¹ The undeveloped land across the street is part of three very large, privately-owned parcels that stretch to the bay where there are houses.

² Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Book 1027/ Page 136.

³ Cert. of Title #43028.

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In 1985, Hill sold Lot 5 to James E. and Cecelia A. Clune of West Springfield, MA.⁴ The Clunes owned the property until 1999, when they sold it to Aubrey A. and Tiffany J. Field of Eastham.⁵ In 2005, they sold it to the current owners, Brianna G. and Brian M. Seppala of Eastham.⁶ It was the Seppalas who demolished the original larger house in front of the cottage (where there is now a pool), and built in 2007 the two-unit building in the northeast corner of the parcel. The property is available for rent and is called "3 By the Sea."

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

1910 Map, *Atlas of Barnstable County*, Boston, MA: Walker Litho. & Publishing Co., 1910.

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Barnstable Patriot Archives. Sturgis Library Digital Newspaper Archive,
<https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/APA/Sturgis/#panel=home>.

Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Reconnaissance Survey Report: Eastham." Typescript, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, 1984.

Town of Eastham Tax Commitment Books. 1902-57.

United States Geological Survey. Aerial Survey 1938-2020,
<https://www.capecodcommission.org/our-work/cape-cod-chronology-viewer/>.
www.ancestry.com - Vital records.



Photo 2. View of second dwelling from Higgins Road, looking northeast.

⁴ Cert. of Title #103907.

⁵ Certs. Of Title #152702, #1557025.

⁶ Cert. of Title #177764.

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Photo 3. Detail of 1952 USGS aerial survey photography (arrow to site of 310 Higgins Road added).

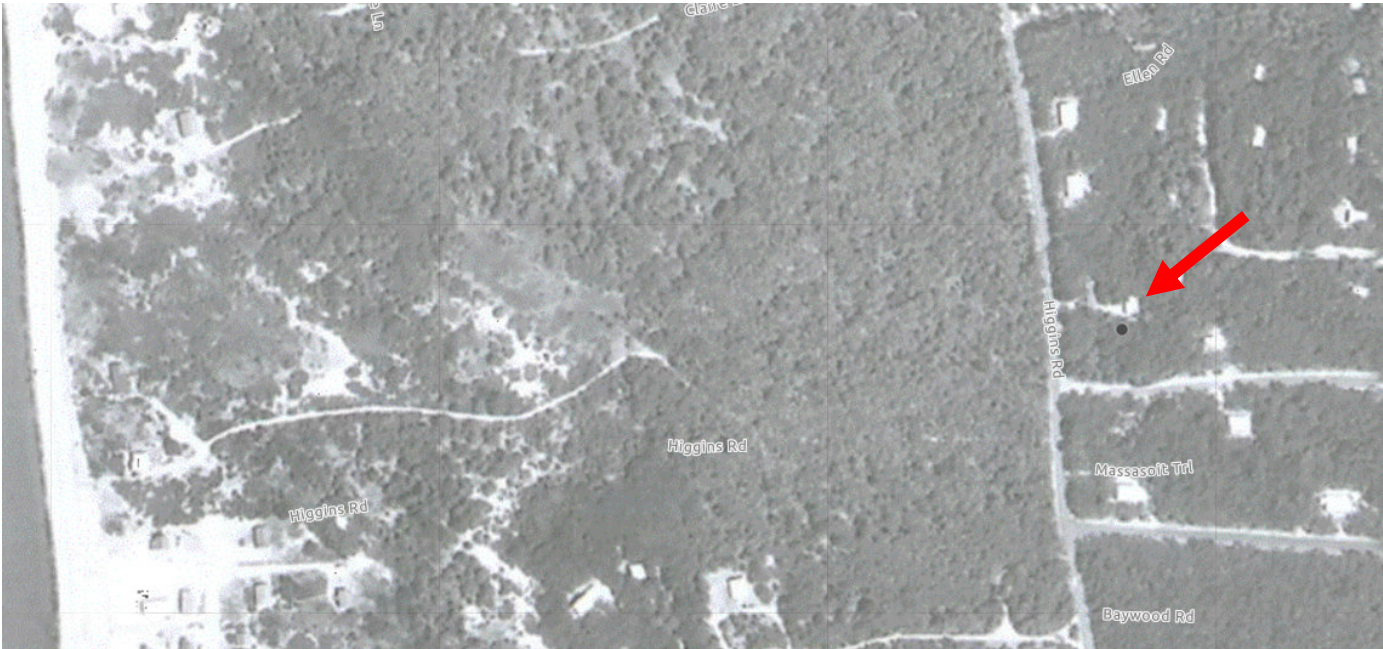


Photo 4. Detail of 1971 USGS aerial survey photography (arrow to 310 Higgins Road added).